

STAT

FROM:

17 June 1966

SUBJECT: Manual Inflation Lanyard for Cygnus Raft

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TO: Project Headquarters

ATTN:

Headquarters requested that the Rescue and Survival Section devise some means whereby the Cygnus pilots could have the option of either inflating the raft manually, or if desired, inflated by the present gravity drop inflation method. Having a manual inflation capability the pilot has a choice, either to inflate or not to inflate his raft. If he should have to bailout over denied territory, not inflating the raft over land would make the pilot less visible to ground observers while making his descent. It would expedite his leaving the landing area because he would not have to take the time to deflate the raft. The raft deflates very slowly through the oral inflation tube. The only fast means a downed pilot has of deflating the raft is to puncture it with a knife or some other sharp object. This would render it useless for future use by the survivor. A manual system was devised by threading a piece of 375 lb test nylon suspension line down through the inside of the nylon tubular webbing lanyard. The line enters the lanyard just below where it connects to the parachute "D" ring (equipment ring) and comes out at the lanyard just above where it connects to the CO² cylinder. The line was connected to a loop where it enters the lanyard so the pilot can easily pull the line to inflate the raft if it is needed. Depending on the mission, either system can easily be connected to the CO² cylinder in just a few minutes by the personal equipment technician. The manual raft inflation system has been tested by the Rescue and Survival Section by subjecting the modified seat kit to five (5) parachute jumps, and the jumper manually inflating the raft during descent. The manual raft inflation system will be brought before the Survival Review Board at its next meeting. If the system is approved all Cygnus seat kits will be modified to incorporate the manual inflation system.

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S E C R E T

OXC 9334
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18 January 1966

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy for Technology, OSA

ATTENTION

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SUBJECT

: OXCART Pilot Life Raft

[redacted] asked me to get in touch with you to request that you reconfigure the life raft release system presently employed by OXCART pilots. As we understand it, the life raft is deployed and inflated prior to the pilot's contact with the surface. [redacted] would like to rearrange this system, whereby the pilot has an option either prior to take-off or prior to ejection. It is understandable that if he is over water it would be a good idea to have the life raft preinflated prior to splash. However, if he is over land and feels that he has a chance to use the life raft, it is obvious he would rather carry it deflated. Will you look into the possibilities of this arrangement and notify myself and [redacted] earliest.

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SIGNED

[redacted]
Chief, Intelligence Division
Office of Special Activities

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ID/OSA/[redacted] (18 Jan 66)

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